

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife

March 19, 2009

Re: H.R. 1080, *Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2009*  
Longworth House Office Building, Room 1334

Statement of:

Susan S. Jackson, President  
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation

Madam Chairwoman, my name is Susan Jackson. I am president of the newly formed International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF). Given the recent founding of this group, I will provide the Committee with some general information about the organization as well as my remarks in support of H.R. 1080.

ISSF is a global partnership among scientists, the tuna industry and the community of environmental non-governmental organizations. The mission of ISSF is to undertake science-based initiatives for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks, reducing by-catch, and promoting ecosystem health. ISSF shares your concern about illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), and on behalf of our board and our science committee, thank you for giving ISSF this opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 1080.

WWF, the global conservation organization, is one of the founders of ISSF, as are the following seafood companies:

- Bolton Alimentari ... which operates in Europe
- Bumble Bee Foods - Clover Leaf Seafoods ... North America
- MW Brands ... Europe
- Princes ... United Kingdom
- Sea Value ... Thailand
- StarKist ... United States
- Thai Union Manufacturing - Chicken of the Sea ... Thailand and the United States
- Tri Marine International ... a global concern.

ISSF shares the committee's belief that catching tuna, or any seafood, by IUU practices is simply not sustainable. ISSF views IUU to be one of four areas of concern regarding sustainable tuna stocks.

The other concerns are:

- Overfishing (including both a lack of conservation measures where needed, inadequate conservation measures, and non-enforcement of enacted conservation measures);
- The overall health of the marine ecosystem, including concerns about by-catch, waste, abandoned gear and some fishing methods; and

- The completeness, accuracy and exchange of catch data needed to effectively manage the world's ocean fisheries.

H.R. 1080 includes provisions that will work towards addressing each of these concerns.

In identifying these issues, and taking action to alleviate them, ISSF believes it is in accord with the world's leading marine biologists and conservation scientists. In that regard, I am proud to say that ISSF has recruited to its board of directors and its science committee some of the world's leading authorities on tuna conservation.

Our science committee includes representative from each of the four regional fisheries management organizations that address tuna. In addition, the ISSF Science Committee chairman is Dr. James Joseph, whose 50 years of scholarship and policy-making experience have earned him recognition as the dean of science-based tuna conservation. The vice chairman of the ISSF Board of Directors is the eminent marine scientist and former director of National Marine Fisheries Service Dr. William Fox. Dr. Fox currently serves as vice president and managing director of fisheries for WWF-U.S.

Sound science is the basis on which the ISSF board recently adopted its first conservation measures and issued its first statement of concern. These actions share many of the same goals that H.R. 1080 addresses.

First, regarding IUU, ISSF adopted a conservation measure to refrain from transactions in tuna caught by vessels on the IUU list of any tuna regional fisheries management organization. This is the identical aim of H.R. 1080

Second, given the threat to the bigeye tuna stock in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean, ISSF urged the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to enact meaningful conservation measures, consistent with the advice of its scientific staff, at the upcoming IATTC Annual Meeting in June. And, unless science-based conservation measures are in place for Eastern Tropical Pacific bigeye, the ISSF measure calls for refraining from transactions in fish from this stock after September 1, 2009.

The third action concerns our shared belief that science findings can only be as accurate as the data on which they are based. The ISSF board adopted a measure that industry participants will provide to the RFMO science bodies relevant data that is within their control. In addition, ISSF strongly encourages states, organizations and all of the seafood industry to provide data within their control to the appropriate RFMO scientific bodies. The data sharing and international cooperation and assistance program portions of H.R. 1080 also recognize the need for data to be accurate and available to the RFMOs.

The fourth action concerns bluefin tuna. As the committee members know, overfishing and IUU fishing have caused a serious deterioration of bluefin tuna stocks in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean. ISSF participants do not take part in the bluefin segment of the tuna industry. Even so, ISSF is concerned that the measures adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) were less than those recommended by the ICCAT scientists and are inadequate to halt overfishing and rebuild the

stock. For this reason, ISSF urges all parties concerned to work diligently to fully implement the ICCAT scientific recommendations for Atlantic bluefin.

As reflected by these initial actions, ISSF believes it has an important role to play, one that supports and complements the very important role this committee is playing in developing H.R. 1080.

ISSF shares the committee's interest in providing information to the regional fisheries management organizations.

ISSF also shares the committee's interest in improving the ability of other nations to

- address IUU fishing activities;
- reduce the environmental impacts of derelict fishing gear and bycatch;
- enhance fisheries management; and
- build capacity for data management in catch and trade activities.

A paper published on February 25, 2009, *Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing*, reports on the first detailed study to arrive at a global estimate of current and historical illegal and unreported catches. The study found a significant relationship, on a global scale, between the level of illegal and unreported fishing and indices of governance as defined by the World Bank. (Agnew DJ, Pearce J, Pramrod G, Peatman T, Watson R, et al. (2009) Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing. PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0004570). ISSF applauds the committee's decision to include in H.R. 1080 provisions of The International Cooperation and Assistance Program.

As the seafood industry, the NGO community, scientists and the Congress take these necessary and important steps toward more effective management of the marine ecosystem, ISSF believes that responsible seafood processors and traders need to have uninterrupted access to seafood products procured by sustainable methods. In this context, ISSF welcomes the alternative procedures language in H.R. 1080 as a means of encouraging the good actors to continue their good practices.

With that, Madam Chairwoman, I conclude my remarks and welcome any questions that members of the committee might have.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee.